

THE JOINT ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

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BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION EMERITUS CLUB

OLIVER SMITH

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INTERVIEWEE: Oliver Smith

INTERVIEWEE: Marden J. Clark

DATE: April 30, 1985

MC: This is the Emeritus Club interview with Oliver R. Smith. We want to try to recollect as much as we can about brother Smith's association with the Journalism Department. We know that he has been a marvelous addition to the university and we want to have as much of his recollection and comments as we can get.

Oliver, I am going to keep this as informal as we can. You have prepared some interesting notes on the department and your association with it. I am really more interested in you as a teacher than I am as an administrator, but maybe that is because I have this awful sense that the only reward for good teaching at BYU has been to take the people out of teaching and make them administrators. I have never been quite happy with that and I am almost afraid that I have been a failure myself, as a teacher, because they never made me much of an administrator.

OS: Well, that is why they rotate the chairmanships in the departments so that people will not be taken out of the classroom completely.

MC: I am glad they do that; lets some very good people get back in, but they're not really very careful about it. They keep people in the administration for a long time.

Well, Oliver, let's just have you talk about your association with the university, when it began, how long you were there, and under what circumstances. I know that we began teaching about the same time because we were in the beginners club, Newcomers Club, wasn't it? about the same time. Tell us what your experiences were.

OS: Well, I have had a great love for BYU for a long time, even before I attended as a student as my mother and father had both studied here. But when I was of college age, my family was living in Alberta, Canada, and moved from there to Salt Lake where I had my first college experience at the University of Utah for two years. These were actually my sophomore and junior years because I had a year's credit from advanced placement courses at Lethbridge, Alberta, where we had a classical education in Latin, French, and English.

MC: That didn't do you much good when you came down here, did it?

OS: It excused me from a lot of general requirements.

MC: I think it's wonderful. I wish somehow I had gotten one of those classical educations. I never learned that, but go ahead.

OS: Well, I went to the University of Utah for two years, 1932-34. I had experiences in English principally, and an interest in speech and theater. I also had extra-curricular activity in journalism as a copy reader for the Utah Chronicle, a weekly paper. The university wasn't offering courses in journalism at that time, although BYU had been doing so. They had had some earlier, but at this particular time did not have. I had interest in both of those fields--speech and journalism.

MC: You're a misbegotten English teacher then, is that right? Your first interest you said was in English?

OS: Yes.

MC: I'd pay attention to that in a hurry.

OS: Yes, I studied with Sidney Angleman and the man who taught classical literature, who died a couple of years ago. In the Speech Department, I

studied with Herbert B. Maw and Lila Eccles Brimhall, and the original Maud May Babcock.

MC: The one and only!

OS: Yes, but I went on a mission in the fall of 1934 to the Eastern States and had an interesting experience as a publicity man when I was called into the office by the mission president. We had a professional helper in New York City who was a BYU alumnus, Roscoe A. Grover. In connection with the dedication of the Angel Moroni Monument, I spent a couple of months in Palmyra as contact man with the newspapers.

The following year while I was serving the mission office president, Don B. Colton (also a BYU alumnus) asked me and another missionary to prepare a pageant which could be portrayed at the Hill Cumorah. We did this in the months of May and June, 1936, and then went out to the site a few weeks ahead of time before the annual summer conference, which was held by the Eastern States Mission, and worked with the staff and cast which was assigned to prepare and dramatize this pageant.

MC: This is the beginning of the Hill Cumorah Pageant?

OS: Yes, so far as I can determine.

MC: This I didn't know; I am happy to hear that.

OS: This was 1936. There had been, some 12 or 13 years earlier, a parade to the pageant by missionaries under the leadership of the former mission president, B. H. Roberts, but they didn't produce anything in a dramatic way. They just held some standards aloft, and had some talks, as far as we can tell.

MC: That's marvelous.

OS: There had been some pageants in the Sacred Grove and the Joseph Smith farm area, a couple of miles away, influenced by the Church's Centennial Pageant in 1930. These pageants were prepared by a Rochester member of the Church and a missionary. They continued until 1934. In July, 1934, a pageant was held there. No pageant was held in 1935 because all of the attention was given to a suitable dedication program for the monument built on the crest of the hill, and that dedication and the accompanying programs lasted four days, headed by President Grant and President McKay, his councilor, and other General Authorities. Well, I felt that was a fortunate opportunity for me.

MC: It was.

OS: A year later, I was living in Palmyra at the home of my parents after I had been released as a missionary. My parents were taking care of some of the church properties there. I had hoped to come to school at BYU, but in the meantime, I was working at a local factory in Palmyra.

MC: Does your Smith family go back to this area?

OS: Yes, actually, they go back to northern New York, St. Lawrence County, New York, where Joseph Smith, Sr.'s brothers lived.

MC: Are they related?

OS: My great-grandfather was the younger brother of Joseph Smith, Sr. So we had interest in that area because of the family, and the Joseph Smith family was thus related. My grandfather was first cousin of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. My father was named for his father's cousin; his name was Hyrum Smith. He was a patriarch at the time, but had lived in Salt Lake previous to going to Palmyra.

Well, to continue, in 1937 President Don B. Colton of the mission worked with a committee in New York for a new pageant script and stage arrangement. They wanted someone out in the field in Palmyra who could help as coordinator and managing director and they appointed me to do this. I had time available to work with it during the months of June and July, and so the first presentation of this new pageant was performed two days in July in 1937.

MC: Then you have administrative experience that goes way back, don't you?

OS: This is where Harold Hansen came in as a missionary in June and he became dramatic director, coaching the pageant performers in the action they should take while the script was being read over the microphone by the readers in the pageant system. And, of course, he was called upon as a missionary to follow that up during the next two years. He did a wonderful job since he was called back as a professional. But that is preliminary to my coming to BYU.

MC: Good preliminaries.

OS: . . .where I found that professor Eastman, who had just died, was the originator of many pageant ideas and taught pageantry at BYU and had encouraged President Colton in the idea of pageantry at Hill Cumorah, which was a great contribution I think.

I came to study journalism, having had my interest whetted very much working with the newspapers in western New York State. Harrison Merrill was the chairman of the Journalism Department. He was aided by an assistant professor, Carlton Culmsee, and both of these men also taught English classes.

MC: I remember them both.

OS: I discovered that the Journalism Department had emerged as a Division of the English Department, and even when I was there, it was prescribed that. In addition to thirty hours of journalism to qualify for a major, you needed thirty quarter hours of English. So I was glad I had prepared well.

MC: That's marvelous. Maybe we should go back to this requirement.

OS: I think we should. I also was interested in speech because I had a background in speech at the University of Utah, and T. Earl Pardoe encouraged me, as the chairman of the Speech Department here, to do that. So I had more theater experience, and also had extra-curricular experience as a copy reader for the Y News, as I had done with the Chronicle. I put quite a bit of time and interest in that.

Have you heard of the work scholarships that BYU had in those days? This was a chance to earn your way through school.

MC: I don't believe they ever offered me one.

OS: My parents, both of whom had known President Harris when he was here at BYU as a student, wrote to him and said, "We have a returned missionary son who is interested in coming to BYU to study, and we wondered if you had any scholarship help." He said, "we have, yes, we have a work scholarship for capable students where they can put in some time in one of the departments on campus and be credited with twenty-five cents an hour toward their tuition." Since tuition was \$87.50 a year, this could work out pretty well for a part-time job. So my work assignment was with Carlton Culmsee and Harrison Merrill who, in addition to their teaching, handled the news bureau work for President Harris and the university. I wrote teacher's stories and news stories about various aspects of the

campus that I was assigned to. It was a valuable addition and complement to the course work which I took in news writing, editing, history of journalism, etc. Magazine writing from Professor Merrill and, in that one year 1937-38, I was able to complete the requirements for graduation.

MC: I thought you said you still had two years to go when you came down here. You did it all in one year?

OS: Well, I actually only had one year's work because I had advanced standing from Alberta, Canada, and two years at the "U".

MC: That's still quite an achievement with all the other things you were doing.

OS: It was a busy time. I also was in forensics and music. I got student body award for being in an opera, where I had a speaking role, but I sang in the chorus. It was a delightful experience to be a student at BYU. And, as I neared graduation time, not having any job offer and being interested in more education, I asked Professor Merrill whether he would need a graduate assistant the following year. And to be sure, he did, because Carlton Culmsee was going on a sabbatical leave for a couple of years to study English and literature at Iowa. So, beginning in June, right after graduation, I had a full-time job for the summer, and a half-time job for the following year, or until Carlton Culmsee should return, which could thus be possibly two years. But a switch in fate happened right then. In August, Professor Merrill had an appendectomy which had complications and he died at the age of fifty-four. It was a great loss to the university.

MC: I remember him as older than that, but I guess maybe my memories are not as clear as yours are.

OS: He was doing so many things at BYU, teaching English, teaching journalism, managing the News Bureau operation and the extension division which included supervising the film audio-visual area, home study, and publication of certain books which the university sponsored. He was a great man, and I was grateful for my association with him. The last association I directly had was taking an English class from him at Aspen Grove in the second summer term, the Alpine term. This was, of course, in Emerson's essays.

MC: Great place to teach those, isn't it?

OS: Yes, indeed, but the latter part of the summer he died, and the last week of the term, Professor Parley Christensen finished the course in his fine way. He also was teaching short story writing at the summer school, and someone else of the English Department completed that for him. The Journalism Department had been formed as a Division of the English Department in 1933 and was given full department status three years later. It didn't have a large enrollment, but it had many students taking some classes and working with the Y News and other publications. The first courses that I have been able to find were taught in about 1917 by another English professor, N. L. Nelson.

MC: That was before my time.

OS: Another faculty member in that department who taught some was a former newspaper writer from Provo, from the Inquirer, named J. Marinus Jensen. He was one of the senior members of the English Department when I came, and he taught editorial writing for the Journalism Department, and sometimes ethics of journalism. The number of graduates was very small at first, two graduates in 1936, the first bachelor's degrees. They were

Reese Fawcett from Colorado and Forrest Green from Utah. I knew Forrest because he had preceded me as a publicity worker in the office of the Eastern States Mission in New York. The next year, they had two more, and the next year, in 1938, there were two more of us--myself and Milton Jacob--who went to work for the Deseret News after he graduated.

MC: I would have graduated in 1938 if I had gone straight through schooling. It took me ten more years.

OS: Well, that's an honor to you. It took me ten years from getting through high school to get through BYU. There's times you have to stop and work, earn some money to live on.

After Professor Merrill's death, President Harris called J. M. Jensen from the English Department, "Will you serve as acting chairman for the time being and take some more courses under your wing if you can, and we'll have Brother Smith work full time and teach some courses and handle the News Bureau work, which I was to do, kind of replacing Carlton Culmsee.

MC: Was this before you had your master's degree?

OS: Yes.

MC: So you were working full time right out of the . . .

OS: Working full time right out of the starter's gate, and taking a part-time load in English. I might add that President Harris apparently had budgeted just for a half-time assistant, thinking that Professor Merrill would be continuing with his load in the department, and so I was paid the munificent sum of fifty dollars a month, half-time pay for full-time work. I suppose I was not legally required to do full time work, but I could see the need for it, filling in, and this was a challenging

opportunity. I did my English study mostly with Dr. Parley Christensen, which was a delightful experience, and I was planning to take a master's degree in English.

MC: Sorry, we loose good men some ways.

OS: Yes. And Professor J. M. Jensen looked to me to handle the News Bureau work with student assistants, and also to teach some of the journalism classes which were needful. And he taught a small load in addition to his English teaching. One of the interesting things that Professor Merrill had started that we continued was a conference for high school students working on school papers and yearbooks. He had started this in the first year in the Division of Journalism, and professor Jensen and I continued this. Actually, in later years, that grew quite large for a one-day conference on Saturday, drawing students and their teachers from high schools in Idaho, Utah, Colorado and Nevada. Within a few years, we had an enrollment for that one-day conference of about eight or nine hundred students.

MC: That's a large enrollment, a beginning of the kind of conference system that had been going on ever since.

OS: That is right. It's been continued every year since that time.

MC: What kind of a salary would you have had if they had paid you for full time work?

OS: Well, during the summers, I received \$100 a month.

MC: Would that have been close to the full time salary during the regular year?

OS: After 1940, when Professor Culmsee came back, I think it was raised to a \$120.

MC: So it was a \$120 a month through eight months, or the full year?

OS: Well, in my case, it was through the full year, because in the summer I was handling News Bureau work full time.

MC: Maybe that isn't as low a salary as it seems given inflation, but it still must be a great deal lower than we'd have today given inflation, isn't it?

OS: In the summer of 1939, I had a few weeks off and took a trip back to New York, visited the mission office, and visited the conference at Palmyra, where the pageant was being presented for the fourth time at the Hill Cumorah, and that was a delightful opportunity.

In the middle of the next year, that is in the winter quarter, 1940, Carlton Culmsee returned from Iowa, having completed his Ph.D. He then was appointed chairman of the department and brought a great deal of energy, insight and dynamic leadership to this area.

MC: He was a vigorous man.

OS: He was also given the additional appointment of Director of the Extension Division which was previously held by Harrison Merrill. The directorship included planning the annual Leadership Week event which had been put on at BYU each winter quarter. I enjoyed working with Carlton. I had taken classes from him during my year as a senior and he was a very capable person.

I had the opportunity of interviewing Professor Culmsee a couple of years ago in the same oral history project of the Emeritus Club. I went to Logan where he is now retired, and found him in good health and in good spirits.

MC: That was one of the real coups that Logan got on us, wasn't it?

OS: Yes. Do you know how that happened? In 1942, the war was advancing and student enrollment was decreasing, at least of the men. I went into the army as a private. Carlton Culmsee went into the Navy as an officer and served for three years. When he was being relieved from active duty, President Harris was being appointed president of Utah State. President Harris knew that he wanted him as an administrator and arranged that he come there after his wartime service was over in the fall of 1945.

About the same time, in the spring of 1945, I was headed overseas in my military duty, I learned that the president was going to be leaving in the summer, and he would be replaced by Howard S. McDonald, who was then Superintendent of Schools in Salt Lake City. So, as I stopped in Salt Lake on my way to the Pacific, I called the office of President McDonald, introduced myself, and told him that when the war was over I would be interested in coming back to BYU. He made a mental note of that, and when the war in the Far East concluded in the fall of 1945, he wrote a letter to the War Department requesting my return so I could help in the staffing of the university because it had so many returned servicemen coming that they needed all the teachers they could get. So that was the way that I was able to get back in the winter term of 1946 and resume teaching as an instructor. I had the position of instructor and full time salary beginning in 1940 when Carlton Culmsee had returned as chairman of the department.

MC: Your association on the faculty then was much earlier than mine. Am I remembering wrong that we were in the Newcomers Club together? I guess maybe I am.

OS: Well, perhaps, my wife was in the BYU women's organization at that time.

MC: That's right.

OS: She worked closely with the other wives and faculty members. I felt my military experience was worthwhile because it led to an experience at the Harvard Business School during the latter half of my officer candidate training. After a year as an enlisted man, I went to the officer candidate school, and the latter part of that training I went to the business school for the Army Air Force course in management control of using statistical methods of reporting data and personnel, material, operations, and so forth. This is what I was doing in the Pacific when I was at the headquarters of Far East Air Forces in the Philippines, and in Japan. It was altogether a very interesting experience.

I was glad to get back to BYU in time to teach the winter quarter of 1946. I found that the Department had been carried on with limited staff under the supervision of Dr. Gerrit de Jong, Jr. who was Dean of the College of Fine Arts, and a very capable administrator. He had obtained the services of some local newspaper people, part-time, including D. O. White, who edited a weekly paper in Provo. In the year 1945-46, he had obtained the service of Ermel J. Morton, who had been on the Salt Lake newspaper staff, and who taught until the summer of 1946, and then moved to Rick's College where he headed their journalism program.

As acting chairman first, and then chairman in 1946, I obtained part-time services of N. LaVerl Christensen of the Provo Herald staff and some graduate assistants. Then a couple of years later, Ray White, from the Tribune staff came to help teach news classes.

MC: It is probably worth interrupting just to comment on that. You were acting chairman and then chairman in 1946. So this says something about

the youth of the department, but it also says something about Oliver Smith, that they would have given you an administrative position that early in your experience.

OS: That was stimulating and challenging. We had some other fine young staffers, too. I think of one in the English Department who had just come back from Iowa with his doctor's degree; this was Bryant S. Jacobs.

MC: Bryant Jacobs was one of my first teachers.

OS: The enrollments in English were high and the number of freshmen English class sections needed were just tremendous. Dr. Parley Christensen was kind enough to say to me one time, "If you would like to teach some English classes, we would be delighted to have you."

MC: I'll bet he would have been delighted. They were so hard up that they gave me a teaching assistantship just after I'd gotten my bachelor's degree.

OS: Well, I had been so delighted with Dr. Christensen that I was sorry that I got involved in the service work of the News Bureau. I was soon given the title of Public Relations Director and had certain other activities to supervise, like the Program Bureau and other things connected with it that I didn't even have time to finish the thesis which I should have done. I had the course work completed; I had a master's degree, all but the thesis.

MC: That is a loss to the department.

OS: However, we were developing journalism with the growing enrollment and we obtained an additional staff member in 1949, Edwin J. Butterworth from the Deseret News. I determined at that time with the permission of the administration to take a sabbatical leave. I had added some courses in

public relations. I had developed the first news laboratory we had. We began courses in radio news and obtained the services of a full time news teleprinter from International News Service, which at that time was costing us \$25 a week, a special educational rate.

MC: Today it would be what, \$2,500?

OS: If we were a daily newspaper, it would be somewhat higher, but we just had a weekly paper at that time. I mentioned that in 1949 Edwin Butterworth came and I left to take doctoral studies at Iowa. This was a great learning experience for me because that was one of the leading schools in the country with a fine staff. They had produced more journalism teachers than probably any other school in the United States. They had doctoral degree programs started, and I believe I was the seventh doctoral candidate to graduate from there.

MC: How long did it take you?

OS: Two years. I started in the fall semester of 1949, studied through the winter semester, the spring semester and also in the summer, and then the fall; the full year. So it was two years and two summers. I also spent some time teaching part-time and as a graduate assistant in the News Workshop assisting with undergraduate students.

MC: Oliver, as I reflect on my own doctoral experience, two years isn't very much time to get a doctoral degree and still be teaching. You must have really been pushing yourself or else you must have been a remarkable student.

OS: Well, we pushed, and my wife pushed, too. She helped working part-time while I was going to school there. During the first year, I had the benefit of the veterans education support and I also, as I said, worked

part-time. I finished in August of 1951. One of the fine things that they had at Iowa, that we eventually were able to do here at BYU, was to have the newspaper staff operate a daily paper, including local and national news from the Associated Press or United Press, with the students being given supervision by faculty members so they would have a practical experience and improve the journalistic quality of the paper. We eventually were able to adopt that at BYU. They also had a radio station, a campus radio station, and in the latter year, in 1950-51, we were doing the beginnings of television news training by having 16mm motion picture cameras for students to get the idea, picturing the newscaster and the news makers in television news. Of course, now we have a broadcasting station, both radio and television at BYU, and have a very fine relationship together in the teaching program in the Communications Department.

MC: Was the broadcasting station, KBYU, developed under the Journalism Department, Oliver?

OS: No, it was developed separately, a little bit later, and perhaps I should mention that. Let me add something about the staff which we had at BYU when I came back.

MC: Please do.

OS: When I returned, the department had been moved out of the Brimhall Building, which was its location since 1936, to a temporary building called the North Building.

MC: I have memories of the North Building.

OS: Which was a temporary building filled with many classrooms and a few offices and it was located on the present site of the library. Edwin

Butterworth was in an office which joined the faculty office for Ray White and myself. We had some rooms in which we had the typewriters for our news reporting classes and a room for the Daily Universe, which was the name which had been given to the former Y News, much to the chagrin of some of us old-timers.

MC: Yes, including me.

OS: We thought that the new title was rather grandiose and presumptive, especially when it led to quips, "of so-and-so is the director of the universe."

In three years, the department moved its headquarters to the new Herald R. Clark Building, which was then occupied by the bookstore upstairs. We had an office and a reading room, which was an idea I got from Iowa, and adjoining offices were for the Y Magazine, the Banyan, and the Daily Universe, that is to say the Weekly Universe. It became daily in the 1950's, a year or two later, and by the close association our faculty people were able to help bring that about.

Ray White left us after one more year, and we used some graduate assistants, then a full time addition to our faculty named Wayne M. Carl, who added a new activity in the summers, a week-long workshop, cooperating with the Department of Special Courses and Conferences in Continuing Education, which gave excellent experience to young high school students and to high school teachers who supervised publications like the papers and yearbooks. We have continued that since that time. He left us, however, to pursue his doctoral studies and remained in Ohio. Other young men who added strength to our department were Glen C. Davis, who taught advertising courses for us, and Heber Woolsey, who first came

half-time, spending the other half-time with the new Motion Picture Production Studio, and Dallas Burnett, who is one of our graduates, who came to us after a master's degree at Northwestern, and later a doctor's degree, and experience with the Deseret News. We also enlisted some help part-time from the head of the BYU Press to teach typography, and from a staff member of the Audio Visual Department of the campus to teach photography and motion picture photography. We viewed these as additional enrichment classes for our students interested in those areas. We also had a remarkable opportunity to use the services of Arch L. Madsen, who came to Provo to manage the KOVO radio station. He offered to teach twice a week a broadcast advertising class, which was one of the pioneer course in the country, and we developed a very strong program in broadcast advertising, along with Glen Davis who is an excellent person in newspaper advertising. We had some other part-time people who succeeded Mr. Madsen, such as Curt Curtis who followed him as manager, after he went to Salt Lake City.

MC: He went directly from here to Bonneville Corporation, did he?

OS: I don't remember that he went there directly. I think he went to Chicago and Washington with the National Association of Broadcasting Groups of the Broadcast Industry Groups. Then he was brought out to Utah again by the Church to head Bonneville International Corporation. He has been a source of support and strength to the department. In 1960, I was preparing to go on another sabbatical and Jean R. Paulson became the new department chairman. He served at this time for a brief period. I went to Hawaii where I taught at the Church College of Hawaii for one year, teaching journalism and English. I taught freshman English there. Jean

had been an editor of a newspaper in Berkeley, and San Luis Obispo, California. Before that, he was a staff member of the Deseret News. He was originally a BYU graduate before the Journalism Department had been formed. After Jean Paulson left, Dallas Burnett was chairman for one year.

In the middle of the year 1962-63, I was appointed to succeed him. We were able, with the assistance of some other individuals, to influence the formation of a Department of Communications, combining broadcasting and journalism--the broadcasting in the Speech Department with the broadcast advertising we had, and broadcasting news in the Journalism Department. In 1963, this Department of Communications was formed and assigned to the College of Fine Arts. Journalism had previously been in Arts and Sciences and in the College of Humanities, under the leadership of such people as Professor Antone Romney, Professor A. Smith Pond, and Professor Rice of the English Department.

MC: None of them are really journalists, but they are fine people, aren't they?

OS: Yes. We were moved from our location in the Herald R. Clark Building to the Jesse Knight Building, which housed the College of Business primarily, and we moved our news laboratory over to that location, and some of the department faculty had their places there. But before this time, Edwin Butterworth, whom I haven't mentioned much, had to decrease his participation as a teacher because his work as head of the News Bureau had increased tremendously under the administration of President Wilkinson. You can understand that.

MC: I remember watching that grow. Poor Ed, he never did have any peace after President Wilkinson came, did he?

OS: He was a busy, busy staff member.

MC: He surely was.

OS: He had been a very capable leader and, in fact, he completed his master's degree. He was the first master's degree granted by the Communications Department.

MC: Worthy graduate, too.

OS: In the development of the Communications Department, with broadcasting, we gained Owen Rich, Norman Tarbox, and T. M. Williams from the Speech Department, which now was called the Department of Speech and Dramatic Arts. We also gained Heber Woolsey, who came back to us to teach full time, principally in the advertising field. He had been with an advertising agency in Salt Lake City. We also gained Merlin Fairbanks, and J. Morris Richards from newspaper experience, and Raymond Beckham, who had been secretary of the Alumni Association.

During these years, we also increased our participation in the national journalism organizations, beginning in 1948. I attended, with other members of the faculty, conventions of the American Association of Teachers of Journalism which soon had its name changed to the Association for Education in Journalism.

I participated in the American Society of Journalism School Administrators. This organization published a newsletter-type of circular to its members. I became editor in 1959 for three years and made it a quarterly. It was called the Journalism Educator. I was the

first editor of the Journalism Educator for three years beginning, I guess, 1957 or '58.

MC: That's now the professional journal for journalism?

OS: For journalism education. The major journal in the field, published by the Association for Education in Journalism, is Journalism Quarterly and Journalism Monographs, which are devoted largely to research. The Educator was devoted to educational administration and teaching in the field. We also obtained a chapter on our campus of the scholastic or scholarship society called Kappa Tau Alpha. We were able to induct the top ten percent of our graduating juniors and seniors and graduate students into this organization.

A third organization that should be mentioned is Sigma Delta Chi. It is a professional group formed in 1909 at a university in Indiana, which then developed a professional wing for graduates of the universities which had chapters, and now publishes a monthly magazine of stature and offers annual prizes to professional and student journalists. We obtained our chapter in 1959 and it has been very strong and one of the leaders in the field.

My term as department chairman ended in 1967 when Morris Richards, who had been on our staff two or three years, was selected by Acting President Crockett to succeed me. I explained to Morris that the reason he was called to the position was that I was going to go on leave, and I had recommended him for it. He had felt a little reluctant to replace me, not being familiar with the policy of rotation, which was just beginning at that time. So he served for three years. After him, Dallas Burnett served again, and another member of our staff from the Deseret

News and U. S. News and World Report, Edwin O. Haroldson, also became chairman in the sequence.

I retired in April 1978, at the age of 65, after 40 years of affiliation with the department. I had been chairman a total of 17 years of that time, over four separate periods.

MC: My comment about the three-year rotation at the beginning of this has something to do with that. You rotate in and out and this gives you a lot of administrative time in forty years. I don't know that very many people would have had that much administrative time, but I guess they did. P. A. Christensen was chairman for about that long, and others were, but that was before the policy really became very effective. Well, this has been a fascinating review of your experiences, Oliver.

OS: Well, we've talked about the classroom and the department chairmanship positions. I might add something about my position away from campus.

MC: Please do.

OS: I knew it was important that I have professional experience in the field, and I did so working with the Provo Herald for two summers, and one winter period with the Deseret News. In the sabbatical, as I mentioned before I was succeeded by Morris Richards, I worked with the Salt Lake Tribune as an editor on the copy desk. I also had an experience in Little Rock, Arkansas, in broadcast journalism, being a news reporter for station KLRA, which was the Columbia Broadcasting System station there. And later, in 1968 with the Public Relations Society of America, in an internship with the public relations department of the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company's headquarters in Boston. In all of these places I was able to work with professionals and get additional insights

and experience in doing the thing which we are teaching the students to do.

MC: This is a remarkable thing, that you kept coming back. I cannot believe that you didn't receive some rather tempting offers. I know faculty salaries weren't always the highest. In fact, I suspect that you suffered quite a bit early in your marriage and in your experience with hundred dollar a month salaries.

OS: As I mentioned, in 1946 I think it was about \$120, and I did do a little moonlighting as an advertising person for Taylor's Department store in Provo. I am sure that the university president felt that this was useful. Each week, I would help Taylor's a couple of nights a week in preparing their retail advertising.

MC: Were you ever really tempted to leave university teaching?

OS: Yes, and this temptation was, would you believe it, the military.

MC: Military, and not professional journalism?

OS: After I had returned from full time duty, I signed up in the reserves. At this time, I was a Captain in the Air Force, in the Army Air Force, which the following year became the separate branch, the U. S. Air Force. I was active as a commander and instructor and other positions in the Reserve in Utah. In 1959, I became affiliated with the Air Force Academy, which had been established in Colorado, as a representative, as a liaison coordinator for the State of Utah. I eventually had about twenty officers who reported to me in this work. I had these affiliations with the Academy, and there came an opportunity a little bit later for a lieutenant colonel or colonel to serve in a reserve active duty position for a period of four or five years. Since I was eligible for

this, I was tempted to take it. At that time, we were between Deans in the College of Fine Arts. I was encouraged to wait until the new dean came and, by this time, I thought it over again, and I thought, "Well, I'll stay." That's when Dean Wheelwright came.

MC: Would you have gone then to Colorado?

OS: I would have gone to Colorado full time.

MC: You would have been teaching still, so this wouldn't have really taken you out of teaching, but it would have taken you out of BYU.

OS: Yes, but I had, I thought, a valuable experience with the Air Force, met some high quality people and kept in touch with the school administrators in Utah and our congressmen who appointed candidates. We had some very fine young men from Utah who graduated from the Academy there. I retired from that activity in 1973, and had the benefit of being promoted, in the interim, to major and lieutenant colonel and colonel.

MC: You would have been running that Air Force if you would have gone to active duty. You have a nice formal list of notes for yourself that we haven't really exhausted yet, have we? Why don't you just go ahead with what you have there?

OS: I served, in addition to being advertising manager for Taylor's--I was succeeded, by the way, by Ray Beckham in that kind of work. I had been a stringer, that is, a correspondent for the United Press in the field of sports. I had earlier been a sports publicity man for the BYU varsity sports and had an opportunity to report for United Press. I was an interviewer with the American Institute of Public Opinion on a part-time basis in central Utah for a year. Later when I got to Iowa I participated as a member of the Association for the Education in Journalism;

I was a member all during my teaching career. I was vice-chairman of the Council on Radio Television Journalism for three years. I was in the Sigma Delta Chi Society, Society of Professional Journalists, a member from 1950 through my career, a co-founder of the Utah professional chapter in 1953, and a faculty advisor of the BYU campus chapter until I retired. I was a member of the National Committee on Undergraduate Affairs for two years. In the Journalism Scholarship Society, I was a member of the National Council for twenty-five years, a vice-president for two years, and president of the Society for two years, ending in 1976. There was another organization in which I participated, the National Council of College Publication Advisors. It related to my work as an advisor to student publications for fourteen years at BYU. I received the national award of this group in 1966 as the Advisor of the Year.

MC: Sounds like you were almost running that organization.

OS: In connection with the college publications, I was executive secretary for thirteen years for the Rocky Mountain Collegiate Press Association. President for one year of the Utah Journalism Education Association, which consisted principally of school and college journalism activities.

In connection with civic organizations, which all of us try to do a little bit of besides our work with the university, I was a director and vice-chairman of the American Red Cross Chapter in Utah County for six years. I was chapter and national president of the Sons of Utah Pioneers, and have been active in the Sons of the American Revolution since 1975. I was state president, district vice-president, and national historian general of this group.

As you know, I enjoyed working with the BYU stakes. I was on four different high councils at different times, as well as Stake High Councilman in Provo East Stake for two different periods, one before my sabbatical leave to study at Iowa, and one after.

Well, it's been a pleasure to talk to you on this. Are there any other areas?

MC: I have a few things that I would like to have you comment on. Do you remember any particular university-wide committees that you served on, things that you were involved with?

OS: Mainly the publicity field and public relations in the years of President McDonald.

MC: How did you manage to not get involved as deeply in President Wilkinson's public relations and publicity campaigns? Was it just that Ed Butterworth took over?

OS: When President Wilkinson came, he talked with me and Ed Butterworth, and said, "Brother Smith, you continue in administrative, journals and academic, and Brother Butterworth will concentrate on the publicity, which we need."

I did have an opportunity, as some other faculty members did, of going to stake conferences in the early 1950's to represent BYU in counseling students who were considering going to college.

MC: This went on for quite awhile, didn't it?

OS: Yes, in fact, President Harris had done something like this before, but not to stake conferences, just visiting in communities where there were prospective students. That's how I first met my wife.

MC: Oh, is it. Where?

OS: She was a native of Ogden, and grew up in Huntsville, but had been in Switzerland with her parents, Thomas E. and Fawn Brimhall McKay, until she was nineteen, at which time she came to go to school at BYU. She was in Salt Lake staying with cousins until school opened. Alonzo Morley and I were working together as an assignment pair to visit prospective students in Salt Lake City. One evening we went to the home of George R. Hill and met a number of students there and one of them was Barbara McKay.

MC: Is that right? George R. Hill was the Sunday School Superintendent at the time, wasn't he?

OS: That is correct. He was the General Board Superintendent, and he had married a sister of my wife's father. I've known her since that time. A couple of years later, I had her in a class and got better acquainted with her. After she had discontinued school, I courted her and we were married in 1942, not long before I went into the military service.

MC: Well, that is one of the real BYU success stories. Do you remember any unusually humorous or embarrassing experiences you had in classrooms?

OS: I remember some humorous ones. At one time, we would dramatize situations for students to describe later in a news story, as if they were a reporter for a newspaper. The one we had the most fun with was to have the Provo Chief of Police come into the classroom and arrest a student and haul him out into the hall, and then ask the class members to write what they saw, see how good they were in observing, and how accurate they were in reporting. This was a fun thing that we did.

MC: You actually had the Chief of Police here then, not somebody impersonating him?

OS: I suppose it was the Sergeant of Police, and he later became the Chief. That's how I remember it.

MC: I'll bet that was a lot of fun. Did you really have a tough time making it financially, back when things were tough?

OS: As a family, or as a department?

MC: Both.

OS: I think we were both about the same. We had some lean times, department budgets were small, little money for equipment or travel, and not too much for faculty salaries.

MC: Had you gone to the Air Force, I suspect that something rather dramatic would have happened to your salary.

OS: Yes, I think so.

MC: Do you have any idea how much?

OS: Well, as a colonel, it probably was double what I would receive here.

MC: Would you have had other such opportunities to double your salary away from BYU?

OS: I didn't seek any, but I think the most lucrative would have been in public relations. For example, if I would stay with a firm in the east.

MC: This would have undoubtedly made quite a difference, alright. Well, we all live through some pretty tight ones.

OS: But we love to be here at BYU, we love to teach and we love to work with the people we are seeing develop.

MC: Somehow this has been my crucial sense of what BYU has meant to me. I assume it has to be for nearly everybody else. When you were a student, where did you live?

OS: I lived first in a rooming house, with room and board on North University Avenue.

MC: That was fancy days then.

OS: Yes, and I paid about \$25 a month for board and room, shared a bed and a room with a son of the widow who was operating the home, and she had about four or six other boys in other parts of the house, besides her own family. Then the second quarter, my brother returned to school and lived with me in a bachelor apartment. Actually it was one room with a hot plate.

MC: Well, that was my experience.

OS: Oh, we enjoyed that because the rent was cheaper and we could live very cheaply. We rented a basement room in the home of the widow of President Keeler, who had been, I guess, a vice-president or assistant to George H. Brimhall. This home was later bought by a faculty member, Lorin Bryner.

MC: The rest of these questions range all over the campus and all over the university life. It seems to me you have covered most of what I would be especially interested in, and I suspect what the emeritus people want. Do you remember any particularly distinguished visitors that came here, or any other kinds of personalities that you might want to mention?

OS: Yes, we had some outstanding visitors from the journalism field and the broadcasting field, including top writers and editors from the New York Times, etc., one of whom had gone to BYU back in the 1920's. His name was Hill.

MC: Other than that, do you remember any church visitors or people that you were particularly involved with during these periods?

OS: Church visitors?

MC: Church leaders, apostles, presidents. . .

OS: Yes. While on my mission, I had the privilege of being a chauffeur for President Heber J. Grant taking him down to Wall Street to meet some of the people he had done business with, representing the Church. President McKay was an uncle of my wife, so we got to see him frequently, and that was a wonderful experience. President, or I should say, Apostle Mark E. Petersen came to New York while I was in the office of the Eastern States Mission, and a companion and I had the privilege of going with him to dinner and talking to him about what the plans were for the Deseret News. He had great plans, and he brought them all to fruition.

MC: He has made a real paper out of that, hasn't he? Well, Oliver, that's quite a bit out of the Oliver Smith years and experience.

OS: You have been very stimulating, that's what brings it out.

MC: Well, you had done some careful preparing, as you always have done. You've always been a systematic man. Maybe that's what made you such an effective administrator; this kind of systematic approach to things. I was a little bit surprised to see these carefully worked out notes that you had for yourself. That takes all the work off of my shoulders.

OS: Well, thank you, it was mostly chronological.

MC: Well, this is what we would expect. I think it has been a marvelous thing to get reacquainted with you, I knew you, of course, but not very well, not this way.

OS: I might mention one other thing in the Church, besides the work on the high councils, the local stakes, and so forth, I was able to serve with Superintendent Hill from the Sunday School General Board for eight years.

MC: That's right. You were on that General Board, and I had forgotten that.

OS: We had a number of other BYU faculty people on that Board, such as Dean Wheelwright, Dean de Jong, and John R. Halliday.

MC: Starts to be a kind of roll call, doesn't it?

OS: Yes. Roman Andrus, Brother Oakes of the College of Education, and many others.

MC: Those are marvelous associations. You may go through a list of names like that, and I sit here tying all kinds of fascinating memories to them. It's just been good to come and see you as you see yourself back through the years, Oliver.

OS: I drew a lot from all of these people, that's what all of us do.

MC: I really didn't know that you were this close to becoming a BYU English professor. I think there is no question that is where you would have ended up if you had stayed in the department, because the university in 1946 was in bad enough shape to hire me by 1947 as a graduate assistant, and right out of my master's degree. So somebody with your background and experience. . .

OS: Well, I love literature, and I love writing.

MC: Yes, you would have to.

OS: Literature enriches the writing.

MC: I believe that. Thank you very much. I appreciate this, and I am sure that our Archives will. I hope that somebody gets to read all this so that the other people will get to know you the same way.

OS: Thank you.

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